# HOSEA 13

## PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

| NASB | NKJV | NRSV | TEV | NJB (MT VERSING) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ephraim's Idolatry | Relentless Judgment on Israel | Rebellion and Restoration (12:1-14:4) | Final Judgment on Israel | Idolatry Punished |
| 13:1-3 (1-3) | 13:1-3 (1-3) | 13:1-3 (1-3) | 13:1-3 | 13:1-3 (1-3) |
| | | | | The Punishment for Ingratitude |
| 13:4-8 (4-8) | 13:4-8 (4-6) | 13:4-13 (4-8) | 13:4-8 | 13:4-8 (4-8) |
| | (7-8) | | | The End of the Monarchy |
| 13:9-11 (9-11) | 13:9-11 (9-11) | (9-11) | 13:9-11 | 13:9-11 (9-11) |
| | | | | The Inevitability of Ruin |
| 13:12-14 (12-14) | 13:12-14 (12-14) | (12-13) | 13:12-16 | 13:12-14:1 (13:12-14:1) |
| | | 13:14-16 (14) | | |
| 13:15-16 (15-16) | 13:15-16 (15-16) | (15-16) | | |

**READING CYCLE THREE (see "Bible Interpretation Seminar")**
***FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL***

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3). Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

**WORD AND PHRASE STUDY**

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 13:1-3**

**[1]When Ephraim spoke, *there was* trembling.**
**He exalted himself in Israel,**
**But through Baal he did wrong and died.**
**[2]And now they sin more and more,**
**And make for themselves molten images,**
**Idols skillfully made from their silver,**
**All of them the work of craftsmen.**
**They say of them, "Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!"**
**[3]Therefore they will be like the morning cloud**
**And like dew which soon disappears,**
**Like chaff which is blown away from the threshing floor**
**And like smoke from a chimney.**

**13:1 "When Ephraim spoke *there was* trembling"** There are two possible understandings of this verse. This is an unusual use of the term "Ephraim" because it seems not to be a reference to the entire Northern Ten Tribes, but to the arrogance ("He exalted himself," BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* PERFECT) of that individual tribe only (e.g., Jdg. 8:1; 12:1). The fear of this tribe can be seen in that when it spoke, the other tribes "trembled" (BDB 958). Remember that Ephraim and Manasseh are half-tribes because they are the children of Joseph (cf. Gen. 48), but they represent the largest tribe, both geographically and numerically.

The second possibility is that Ephraim stands for the leaders and king of the capital, Samaria. It was the first king who set up the golden calves as a rival to the Jerusalem temple (cf. 1 Kgs. 16:31). It was Ahab and Jezebel who brought Ba'al worship to Israel (cf. 1 Kgs. 16:31).

The third option

1. NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NJB, Peshitta – "trembling"
2. REB – "a prince and leader"
3. JPSOA – "spoke piety"
4. LXX – "received statutes"

This NOUN (BDB 958) appears only here in the OT, but it does appear in the DSS as "tremble."

I think what verse 1 means is that when Ephraim spoke with awe (i.e., trembling) of YHWH, they were honored (i.e., lifted up), but when they sinned by being involved in Ba'al worship, they were judged.

▣ **"Baal"** This refers to the male fertility god of the Canaanite pantheon (cf. Hos. 9:10). For an excellent reference see William Foxwell Albright's book, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, page 72ff.

▣ **"he did wrong and died"** This refers to the powers and preeminence of the tribe ceasing ("died" BDB 559, KB 562, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*, used metaphorically of God's judgment, e.g., of Moab in Amos 2:2; of Israel in Ezek. 18:31).

**13:2 "molten images. . .idols"** This may refer to the golden calves of Bethel and Dan (cf. line 5). However, these descriptions do not exactly fit them. They were made of wood and overlaid with gold. Therefore, this may refer to images at local Ba'al shrines (cf. Hos. 2:8; Isa. 46:6; Jer. 10:4).

▣ **"Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves"** We learn from 1 Kgs. 19:18 and Job 31:27 that kissing the idol was part of Ba'al worship (the VERB could be an IMPERFECT or a JUSSIVE, NASB). This is one example of how the supposed worship of YHWH, by means of the golden calves, was corrupted into Ba'al worship. They worshiped what they made but it could not see, hear, or act!

**13:3** There are four elements mentioned which describe Israel in her transitoriness and rebellion, which will be quickly judged and removed: morning cloud, dew, chaff, and smoke.

▣ **"chimney"** Literally this is "window" (BDB 70). Chimneys were non-existent in the ancient world. The buildings had small windows close to the ceiling for the purpose of letting the smoke out. Many homes placed the fire in the center of the room and allowed the smoke to exit at whatever window was possible.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 13:4-8**

**4Yet I *have been* the LORD your God**
**Since the land of Egypt;**
**And you were not to know any god except Me,**
**For there is no savior besides Me.**
**5I cared for you in the wilderness,**
**In the land of drought.**
**6As *they had* their pasture, they became satisfied,**
**And being satisfied, their heart became proud;**
**Therefore they forgot Me.**
**7So I will be like a lion to them;**
**Like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside.**
**8I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs,**
**And I will tear open their chests;**
**There I will also devour them like a lioness,**
***As* a wild beast would tear them.**

**13:4 "Yet I *have been* the LORD your God**
**Since the land of Egypt"** This is how YHWH introduced His Ten Commandments (cf. Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). This again is a reference to the Exodus as the courtship and marriage time between God and Israel (cf. Hos. 13:5; 2:14; 9:10; 12:9).

▣ **"you were not to know any god except Me"** This phrase is in the Ten Commandments (cf. Exod. 20:3; Deut. 5:7). The VERB (BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* IMPERFECT) implies intimate, personal relationship (BDB 446, KB 448, *Hiphil* PARTICIPLE, e.g., Isa. 43:3,11,14; 45:15,21-22; 63:8).

▣ **"For there is no savior besides Me"** YHWH was the only One and the only Redeemer (BDB 446, KB 448, *Hiphil* PARTICIPLE, e.g., Isa. 43:3,11,14; 45:15,21-22; 63:8).

SPECIAL TOPIC: MONOTHEISM

SPECIAL TOPIC: SALVATION (OT)

**13:5 "I cared for you in the wilderness"** The VERB (BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* PERFECT) is literally "to know" (i.e., meaning chosen and given special knowledge of YHWH). God's special care of

Israel showed His love (cf. Deut. 32:10-14).

The ancient Greek and Syriac translations have "feed" (BDB 944) instead of "cared."

SPECIAL TOPIC: KNOW

SPECIAL TOPIC: SHADOW AS A METAPHOR FOR CARING

▣

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|---|---|
| **NASB, NRSV** | **"In the land of drought"** |
| **NKJV** | **"in the land of great drought"** |
| **TEV** | **"desert land"** |
| **NJB** | **"in a land of dreadful drought"** |
| **REB** | **"in a land of burning heat"** |
| **JPSOA** | **"in a thirsty land"** |
| **LXX** | **"in an uninhabitable land"** |

This CONSTRUCT, which is found only here in the OT, means "intense heat and dryness." It is a way of alluding to YHWH's supernatural provision of water during the wilderness wandering period (e.g., Exod. 15:22-26; 17:1-7; Num. 20:2-13; 21:16; Deut. 32:10-14).

**13:6** What a tragedy! God's blessings ("satisfied" [twice] BDB 959, KB 1302, the first *Qal* IMPERFECT and the second *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*) turned into self-centered pride and spiritual fatness (cf. Deut. 6:10-12; 8:11-20; 32:13-15).

▣ **"Therefore they forgot Me"** Here is the tragedy. They took the physical, but missed the truly valuable—a personal relationship with the only Creator, Redeemer God (cf. Hos. 2:13; 4:6; ;8:14; Deut. 8:14; 31:16,20; 32:15,18; Jdg. 10:6).

**13:7-8** These are references to wild animals as metaphors of God's judgment: lion, leopard, bear, and lioness (e.g., Jer. 2:15; 4:7; 5:6; Ps. 7:2; 50:22). This animal attack contrasts the shepherding imagery of Hos. 13:6.

**13:7** It is interesting that the ancient translations (LXX, Peshitta, Vulgate) add, "on the way of Assyria," implying this refers to the Assyrian exile. Assyria is specifically mentioned in Hos. 7:11; 8:9; 9:3; 10:6; 11:11.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 13:9-11**

**9*It is* your destruction, O Israel,**
**That *you are* against Me, against your help.**
**10Where now is your king**
**That he may save you in all your cities,**
**And your judges of whom you requested, "Give me a king and princes"?**
**11I gave you a king in My anger**
**And took him away in My wrath.**

**13:9 "That *you are* against Me, against your help"** The Hebrew text is ambiguous. The UBS Text Project, pp. 266-267, gives three possibilities.

1. "that which has caused your destruction, O Israel, is that you are against me (who is your help)"

2. "that which has cause your destruction, O Israel, is that in me alone is your help (while you looked for it elsewhere)" [JPSOA]
3. "that which has caused your destruction, O Israel, is that in me, you look for your help (that is, trusting blindly in my longsuffering and patience)"

What an irony! Israel had forsaken her only help (i.e., YHWH, cf., Jer. 2:17,19). The LXX and Peshitta translations have, "For who will help you?"

**13:10-11** This seems to be another reference that relates to Hosea's negative attitude toward the monarchy (cf. Hos. 7:3-7; 8:4,10,13; 10:3), but it may also reflect Deuteronomy 28 (esp. Hos. 13:36,52). The line 11a, "I gave you a king in My anger," reflects 2 Sam. 8:4-9. The next line, 11b, represents the exile by Assyria (cf. 2 Kgs. 17:1-6).

**13:10 "Where now is your king"** The MT has "I want to be your king," but several ancient translations (LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate) emend the text to read like the NASB.

The MT has "I will be" (אהי, BDB 224, NKJV) but most ancient and modern translations emend it to "where" (איה). The UBS Text Project, p. 267, gives "where" a "B" rating (cf. NASB, NRSV, NJB, REB, JPSOA, LXX, Peshitta, Targums, Vulgate).

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 13:12-14**

**12 The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up;**
**His sin is stored up.**
**13 The pains of childbirth come upon him;**
**He is not a wise son,**
**For it is not the time that he should delay at the opening of the womb.**
**14 Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol?**
**Shall I redeem them from death?**
**O Death, where are your thorns?**
**O Sheol, where is your sting?**
**Compassion will be hidden from My sight.**

**13:12 "bound up"** The VERB (BDB 864, KB 1058, *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE) means the retention of guilt.

▣ **"His sin is stored up"** The VERB (BDB 860, KB 1049, *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE) is a metaphor for "remembered" or "cataloged" (cf. Hos. 7:2; 8:13; 9:9).

**13:13** This metaphor ("pains of childbirth" BDB 408, KB 411, *Qal* PARTICIPLE) seems to refer to

1. Israel as an unborn son who is reluctant to come out of the womb and, therefore, is spiritually dead (cf. 2 Kgs. 19:3; Isa. 37:3)
2. labor pains as a symbol of judgment (cf. Micah 4:9-10)

Israel should have recognized the pain and repented (cf. Isa. 21:3; 26:17).

**13:14 "Shall I ransom. . .Shall I redeem"** These two parallel phrases can be interpreted as INTERROGATIVES (questions, cf. NASB; JPSOA) or as INDICATIVES (statements, UBS Text Project, p. 268, gives this a "B" rating, cf. NIV). The Septuagint translates them as INDICATIVES and this is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:55. However, the Masoretic Text, in context, seems to imply that they are questions (NASB) and they imply judgment (Hos. 13:14e, NET Bible, p. 1577, #13).

The first VERB (BDB 804, KB 911) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT and second VERB (BDB 145, KB 169) a *Qal* IMPERFECT.

SPECIAL TOPIC: RANSOM/REDEEM

▣ **"Sheol"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: WHERE ARE THE DEAD?, I. B.

▣ **"thorns. . .sting"** These are metaphors (i.e., "plagues" BDB 184 and "destruction" BDB 881) of the means and fear of death.

▣ **"Compassion will be hidden from My sight"** The JPSOA has "Revenge shall be far from My thoughts," basing this on the use of "compassion" (BDB 637) in Deut. 32:36; Isa. 1:24. The NRSV and NIV translations group v. 14 with Hos. 13:15-16.

**NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 13:15-16**

**15Though he flourishes among the reeds,**
**An east wind will come,**
**The wind of the LORD coming up from the wilderness;**
**And his fountain will become dry**
**And his spring will be dried up;**
**It will plunder *his* treasury of every precious article.**
**16Samaria will be held guilty,**
**For she has rebelled against her God.**
**They will fall by the sword,**
**Their little ones will be dashed in pieces,**
**And their pregnant women will be ripped open.**

**13:15**

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|---|---|
| **NASB, JPSOA** | **"Though he flourishes among the reeds"** |
| **NKJV, REB** | **"Though he is fruitful among *his* brethren"** |
| **NRSV** | **"Although he may flourish among the rushes"** |
| **TEV** | **"Even though Israel flourishes like weeds"** |
| **NJB** | **"Though Ephraim bears more fruit than his brothers"** |

The MT has "though he a son of brothers may bear fruit." The ancient translations (LXX, Peshitta, Vulgate) have "he causes division between brothers." Modern translations such as the NASB assume an emendation of "reed" for "brother."

1. among brothers – בין אחים (UBS Text Project gives an "A" rating)
2. among reeds – בין אחוים (see NET Bible, p. 1578, #1)

The VERB "bear fruit" (BDB 826, KB 903, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is a word play on "Ephraim." However, God's east wind (Assyria) is coming and he will be fruitful no more (i.e., the water will be dried up). War will devastate his people, his most vulnerable ones (cf. Hos. 13:16)!

▣ **"The wind of the LORD"** This phrase refers to Assyria as a chosen tool of God for the chastisement of His people, Israel (cf. Hos. 12:1; Isa. 10:5).

▣ **"will become dry. . .will be dried up"** This parallelism required an emendation.

"Will become dry," line d, is "ashamed" (BDB 101, KB 116, *Qal* IMPERFECT) in the MT, but the LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate have "will be dry" (BDB 386, KB 384, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT). This emendation is suggested by the BDB.

**13:16 "They will fall by the sword"** This refers to the collapse of the capital, Samaria, in 722 B.C. by Assyria. This verse vividly describes the horror of ancient warfare (see note at Hos. 10:14). The entire population suffers (cf. Isa. 10:24-27).

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